

12/1/08 (9)

**Christine Joyce**

**From:** Clint Seward [cseward@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 29, 2008 3:03 PM  
**To:** Board of Selectmen; Lauren Rosenzweig  
**Subject:** Monday's discussion of the Fincom point of view document by the BOS



2010 Finance  
Committee Point O..

Dear members of the Board of Selectmen,

We note that the BOS will be discussing the FinCom Point of View at Monday's meeting and we look forward to your resulting budget guidance. With dire economic times approaching, Acton voters are looking for help from the BOS to produce a prudent budget in accord with the economic downturn facing us.

Will BOS approved budgets this year support the points in the FinCom point of view?

Will the BOS agree to the recommended strict hiring restrictions? Does this mean a "no new personnel" budget?

Will the BOS direct the attrition of staff without replacement?

The FinCom recommends taking a "hard reality" approach to salary negotiations. Does the BOS agree this is and will be part of all salary negotiations? Will raises be in line with Acton citizens' experiences?

The FinCom recommends continued cost reduction efforts. What action is the BOS taking to implement a cost reduction task force?

FinCom suggests that the "opportunity to increase the property taxes below the 2 1/2% trigger has now passed." Does the BOS agree with this "Tax to the Max" approach to the budgets? Will the BOS offer a zero tax increase alternative to April Town Meeting?

FinCom suggests advertising tax abatement programs, which, while useful, provide little effective relief due to unrealistic qualification requirements. What new action will the BOS take to improve needed tax abatement programs?

The FinCom POV provides no guidance on the use of reserves. Will the BOS work to preserve the reserves by avoiding spending reserves for recurring operating expenses as recommended by Mass DOR Best Practices?

Will the BOS develop an "Acton Reserve Policy" for approval at the next Town Meeting?

Thank you for your attention to these issues and we look forward to your responses.

Clint Seward, Acton Voters Group